

M. L.

Gc
974.702
T75b
1851369

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02222 4130



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

5456

LAST

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE OLD

STATE STREET M. E. CHURCH.

TROY, N. Y.

SABBATH EVENING, FEB. 26, 1871.

BY REV. G. W. BROWN.

Farewell, thou temple of our God,
Whose walls shall echo truth no more;
Nor courts again by saints be trod.
While thronging multitudes adore:
Thy memories bind us like a spell.
'Tis hard to say this last farewell.

THE
NEWBERRY
LIBRARY
CHICAGO

TROY, N. Y.:

EDWARD GREEN, 216 RIVER STREET.
1871.

1851369

Historical Sermon.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Troy, *February 27, 1871.*

Rev. G. W. BROWN :

DEAR SIR: After hearing your "Memorial Discourse," in the State Street M. E. Church, last evening, we believe it to be of such permanent interest, that we request a copy for publication. Hoping to receive a favorable reply,

We remain,

Yours, with respect and esteem,

JOHN W. MACKEY,
JOHN G. BUSWELL,
GARDINER LANDON,
WILLIAM TUCKER,
MYRON KING.

Troy, *February 28, 1871.*

Messrs. J. W. MACKEY, J. G. BUSWELL, and others :

DEAR BRETHREN. If you judge the sermon of Sabbath evening will aid in reviving and keeping fresh, memories which ought not to die, I shall be most happy to comply with your request.

With sentiments of respect,

I remain, yours,

GEO. W. BROWN.

At the Quarterly Conference of State Street M. E. Church, held February 28, 1871, on motion of L. R. Avery, our pastor, Rev. G. W. Brown. was requested to furnish a copy of his recent "Memorial Sermon" for publication.

M. W. MOREY, *Secretary*

SERMON.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee." DEUTERONOMY, viii, 2.

"And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." EXODUS, xxxiii, 14, 15.

Our eyes to-night turn naturally to the past. We link with this service the history of this church. It is no strange thing that so many are in attendance at this hour, for next to your own fireside homes, what place should be so near to you as this? If that roof beneath which you were born, and which sheltered your youth, is dear to you; if the very rooms where you have listened to voices now hushed on earth forever, have an air of sacredness thrown around them; and if their walls still echo in memory's ear the prayers and words of love spoken long, long ago, making it seem almost a sacrilege to tear away their foundations and lay them in the dust, with what emotions would you be expected to attend this service? Here many of you were "born again;" the arrow was winged from this pulpit by some skilled archer, which sped to your heart; here the tear of penitence was shed; and these walls, could they speak, would tell of your earnest prayers for pardon, and of the "songs of deliverance" which followed when God's anger was "turned away," and He "comforted you." Nay, it is not strange if you turn to the place of your spiritual birth with a warmer, tenderer love than

to the spot where your infant eyes first opened to the light of day. Who shall chide you, if you "love the gates of Zion better than all the dwellings of Jacob?" or if sometimes you sing:

"There is a spot to me more dear
Than native vale or mountain,
A spot for which affection's tear
Springs grateful from its fountain;
'Tis not where kindred souls abound,
Though that were almost heaven,
But where I first my Saviour found.
And felt my sins forgiven."

"Oh sacred hour! oh hallowed spot!
Where love divine first found me,
Wherever falls my distant lot,
My heart shall linger round thee;
And when from earth I rise to soar
Up to my home in heaven,
Down will I cast my eyes once more
Where I was first forgiven."

I wonder not, that, at our morning's service, one of the veterans, after alluding to it in touching terms, stooped and printed a kiss upon this altar.

Here you have had applied the baptismal water, the sign of the washing of regeneration, the type of the inner cleansing of your souls had found in the precious blood of Christ. Here you have obeyed the Saviour's command by often partaking of his own appointed memorial feast, and found him present while you "drew near with faith and took the holy Sacrament to your comfort." Here many have repeated low and tenderly those vows which have linked two souls and bound two destinies together till death should them part. And here, too, with stricken heart and weeping eyes, you have taken a last look upon the pale, sweet faces of many who "slept in Jesus," and heard from the lips of the living preacher, and the lips of the silent dead, the admonition, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as

ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." To this sacred shrine you have turned your footsteps on God's holy day, to listen to the herald of salvation, as

"By him the violated law spoke out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispered peace."

You have come "hungering for the bread of life," and had it broken to your souls; you have come weary and faint, perhaps after a season of temptation, when your doubting soul has trembled between hope and despair, and heard words that, like a ringing clarion, have sent the blood tingling through your veins, inspiring courage and kindling hope in your heart. You have come, too, after seasons of spiritual declension, when your first love had grown cold, when the world had thrown its silken charm around you, and, by its fatal attraction, had drawn you imperceptibly, but surely, away from Christ; when you had grown indifferent to spiritual things, and the light of holy love was flickering and dying out in your heart, and when, alas, you were blind to it all, and knew not that, loosened from your moorings, you were drifting — drifting toward ruin.

Then, from this pulpit, has been sounded the alarm, and, under the searching truth, the scales have fallen from your eyes, the realization of your danger has flashed upon you, and starting as from a dream, you have gone out, like another Peter, and wept bitterly while pleading for the return of the old tenderness of heart and the sweet assurance of forgiveness. What wonder, then, if your spiritual home is linked to your hearts and to the past by so many tender and solemn associations, that it costs a struggle to turn from it to-night for the last time — sorrowing most of all, that within it you shall hear the word of life no more! The

new home may be more beautiful, more commodious, more modern; you may greatly prefer it; yet the heart cannot so soon and so easily forget the past, or erase the memory of its dearest shrines, as to step from *old* to *new* without, at least, a momentary pang. Not that we would tarry here. The bride goes gladly, though tearfully, from what has been, but is no more to be, her home. She loves the mother in whose arms she was cradled none the less because she loves another more.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Methodist itinerant followed close in the wake of immigration to this place, and converts were gathered among the early settlers of the village of Troy. But the records of these early efforts are very meagre. Among others, the eccentric Lorenzo Dow is known to have preached here before the commencement of the present century. For some time the neighboring circuits furnished the little band with the preached word. They were also greatly indebted to Joel Ketchum and Elijah Chichester, both local preachers, who for several years were ready to supply the lack of regular "circuit preachers" by their ministrations. Mr. Ketchum was quite popular in his style and drew many to the Methodist meetings. In 1800, there were no less than thirty members in the society. The residence of most of these, however, was but temporary, and in 1802, Benj. Betts and Caleb Curtis were the only male members in good standing. Mr. Betts died soon after, leaving Mr. Curtis the only male member, and in 1803, Elias Vanderlip tore up the class paper in despair, and withdrew the appointment for preaching. Thus the early official records are forever beyond our reach. Caleb Curtis

still had occasional preaching at his house. In 1805, Elijah Chichester revived the society and enrolled seven in class. In 1806, two families united by letter. John Wright came from England and inquired for Methodists, but was told there were none. After considerable search and inquiry, he at length found the little class, guided in part by their singing, and entered the room joyfully exclaiming, "Now I have found you." He was a great help to the youthful society, and was one of the Board of Trustees of the future church, of which he lived and died a member.

Much credit is due to Samuel Scoby, Morris De Camp, Stephen Andres, Eliphalet and Roger King, David Canfield, Wm. McBurney and others, for their perseverance and christian zeal. Dr. Loudon, a skillful physician, and a man of much influence, added his vigorous efforts for the advancement of the cause, and subsequently bequeathed to the church a house and lot for a parsonage.

The first church was built in 1809. Before it was completed, it was fitted up with temporary seats and occupied, and while in this condition a gracious revival commenced. In this year the society was legally incorporated, its first trustees being David Canfield, Eliphalet King and Samuel Scoby, the title being "The Methodist Episcopal Church of the village of Troy." The charter having been lost, it was revived under the statute in 1817, with the following persons as trustees: Abner Foster, John Loudon, John Wright, Roger King and William Whipple. Troy first appears in the minutes in 1810, when Dr. Phæbus was appointed preacher. He did not, however, serve. In the following year Troy does not appear, and the presumption is that it was again connected with an adjoining circuit.

Although we find no record of the fact, yet it is certain that Smith Arnold resided in Troy, in 1811, as preacher.

In 1812, Troy re-appears in the minutes, when Peter P. Sandford was appointed to the charge, and from this time to the present, a period of sixty years, the record of ministerial supply is unbroken. Laban Clark succeeded Mr. Sandford in 1813, and for two years preached the word of life. He was an eminently practical man; his piety was calm, steady, and deep. After continuing in the ministry a full half century, he retired from the active work in 1851. He was a principal founder of the Wesleyan University, and was the President of its first Board of Trustees. During all its early struggles it was one of the dearest objects of his interest, and over it he watched with the solicitude of a parent for his most darling child. He was also one of the founders of our Missionary Society, which was organized at his suggestion when he was pastor in New York, in 1819. He has but recently passed to his reward, having died at Middletown, Conn., Nov. 28, 1868, in the ninety-first year of his age; a noble, venerable and beloved hero of American Methodism.

About this time Lansingburgh was severed from Troy, with which it had formerly been connected.

In 1815, Tobias Spicer was stationed in Troy; under his labors a far more extensive revival than anything previously known in the city, took place. At the end of his term of service, Mr. Spicer had the pleasure of reporting two hundred and fifty members in the society, more than double the number that were there at its commencement. He was ever a faithful and earnest laborer in the Master's vineyard; and even after retiring from the regular work, preached as he had opportunity.

He was succeeded in 1817, by Samuel Luckey, whose name has been identified with the history of Methodism for more than half a century. Under his ministration there was another outpouring of the spirit, which brought about one hundred and fifty more into the church. It was during his pastorate that our Sunday School was organized; and had he left no other memento of his labors, this should embalm his memory in the hearts of the members of this church. In 1867, he visited his old charge, and preached at the semi-centennial celebration of the Sabbath School.

William Ross was the next pastor, who labored among God's people here for two years, and was then followed by Benjamin Griffen, who was one of the most able preachers of his day; a strict "disciplinarian," and for many years a prominent member of the New York Conference. In 1823, Noah Bigelow was stationed here; he continued but a year, and was succeeded by James M. Smith, who, after two years of service, gave way to Stephen Martindale, during whose pastoral service this house of God, in which we now worship for the last time, was built. It was commenced in the spring of 1827, and completed in the autumn of the same year. The membership at the time numbered four hundred and thirty-seven. That was a joyful day for Methodism in this section, when this house was opened for Divine worship. It was dedicated by Bishop Hedding, December 1st, 1827; Nathan Bangs and many of the prominent preachers of the day assisting on the memorable occasion. The following persons were members of the Board of Trustees at this time: William W. Whipple, Charles Lemon, Harvey Betts, Levi Rogers, and James Russell. The next pastor of the church was Samuel Merwin. He was a man that will not soon be

forgotten among the Methodist societies of the Atlantic States from Canada to Maryland. Dignified in person, powerful in eloquence, generous in spirit, and mighty in labor, he was one of the most popular preachers of his day. His efforts in the newly erected edifice were greatly blessed to the good of the people. He was assisted, during the second year, by Rev. John Tackaberry. In March, 1828, a small society was formed in West Troy, consisting of about twelve members, and William Tucker was appointed leader. This little band struggled on under the fostering care of the State street church until 1830, when they were visited with a gracious revival, and their numbers increased to over seventy members. They built a church in 1831. Up to this date, Albia and West Troy were united with State street; Abiathar M. Osbon, living at Albia, and Stephen Remington at West Troy. The next year, Albia was a separate appointment, but West Troy remained another year, with F. G. Hibbard as preacher, and then became a separate station.

John B. Stratton was the next appointed pastor of this church. The period of his labor was a time of great ingathering. He was aided in his revival efforts by the celebrated John Newland Maffitt, then in his prime. Here, night after night, for weeks, the silver-tongued Maffitt proclaimed the truth to audiences limited only by the capacity of the church, which were swayed like forest branches in the breeze before the magic spell-like power of his eloquence. Multitudes were not only attracted to the preacher, but to God,—and those are yet living and before me now, who were won by him to Christ. In 1832, Buel Goodsell was stationed here. He was a faithful and laborious pastor, and as an exhorter was without a rival. Some are still members

of the church, whose names forty years ago were entered by him on our records. He was succeeded in 1834, by Noah Levings. As he was converted here, and went out into the ministry from this church, and was twice its pastor, we may speak of him at greater length. He joined the society then worshipping in the wooden building which occupied the site on which this church now stands, in 1813. The circumstances are thus related by the venerable minister of God, who seems to have been the principal instrument in his conversion : "One day an apprentice boy, in his blacksmith's garb, direct from his labor, called upon him and made application to be received into the society. He appeared to be about sixteen years of age, was small in stature, bashful in his address, and the circumstances of his introduction were peculiar and somewhat disadvantageous. Yet there was something so unassuming and winning in his manner, so sincere and intelligent in his whole appearance and conversation, that a very favorable impression was made upon the mind of the preacher, and he admitted him as a probationer, at the same time giving him encouragement and counsel. On the following Wednesday night, at their public prayer meeting, when the leading members had prayed, and it was nearly time for dismissal, a youthful voice, whose feminine tones were scarcely sufficient to fill the church, was heard leading in prayer. The prayer was feeling and appropriate, but short ; so short as to be at the longest comprised within a minute. As the preacher passed down the aisle, his blacksmith boy stood at the end of the seat, waiting to grasp his hand with christian affection. On the next Wednesday evening, the silvery tones of the same youthful voice were again heard, near the close of the meeting, leading in its devotions. At

this time he prayed with more fervor, more compass of thought and more self-possession, and yet his prayer was not more than a minute and a half in length. At the close of the meeting, as the official brethren gathered around the preacher, one inquired who that boy was. Another said his forwardness must be checked, and a third that he must be stopped altogether. The preacher simply replied : ‘ Now, brethren, let that boy alone—there is something more in him than you are aware of.’ And from that time no one questioned the right of the young blacksmith boy to officiate at the public prayer meetings.” Such were the public beginnings of one who, in after years, became eminent as a minister of the gospel—distinguished alike for the ability and the success with which he preached Christ crucified. He was an efficient teacher in the first Sabbath School established in Troy ; while yet in his minority was appointed class-leader, and on the 20th of December, 1817, being then a few months over twenty-one, he was duly licensed as a local preacher by the Quarterly Conference of the station. In May of the following year, he was received into the New York Conference. During the pastorate of Mr. Luckey he returned to Troy to pay a visit to his friends. Dr. Luckey thus describes a scene occurring during that visit : “ He preached for me one Sabbath. At the close of the evening service, I returned to my house, and left him at the church with a large number of his companions, who remained behind for the purpose of practising in sacred music. After I had been at home a short time, there came a lad running in great haste to apprise me that I was wanted at the church. Without knowing for what purpose I was going, I made my way to the church as soon as possible, and there witnessed a scene which is more easily conceived than described.

I found Mr. Levings at the altar engaged in prayer, and about forty, chiefly young persons, kneeling around him, and upon inquiry I ascertained that this was the explanation. Mr. Levings was sitting in the altar while the young people were singing, and he observed a young lady sitting near weeping. He went and spoke to her, and found that she was deeply concerned upon the subject of her salvation. He asked her if he should pray for her, and when she answered in the affirmative, he requested that the singing might be suspended, and proposed that they should join in prayer. They did so, and such was the effect of the announcement, that forty came and knelt with her." This was the commencement of a gracious revival to which we have already alluded.

Naturally gifted with energy, rare tact and vivid eloquence, young Levings rapidly rose to eminence, not only in his own denomination, but in the general religious community.

At the Conference of 1834, he was stationed here; thus "after sixteen years' absence from the society which raised him up, and from which he went forth to preach the word of life, he returned to them as their pastor.

"In his weakness they had watched over him; they had counseled, encouraged, and prayed for him.

"While yet a stripling, they had sent him forth into the vineyard of the Lord, with their benedictions upon his head; and now, in the maturity of his strength, he came back to repay their kindness, and to devote his energies to building them up in the Lord."

A portion of the church had for some time desired to have the seats free; from this fact, and the society being altogether too large for one house of worship, the Quarterly Conference in June, 1834, advised the trustees to put up another church in the upper part of the city.

This was done, and it was ready for dedication August 30, 1835. The new church was supplied by Samuel D. Ferguson, until the Conference of 1836, when Charles Sherman was appointed pastor. In him there was a happy blending of those excellencies which make up the successful ambassador of Christ, and seldom, if ever, was a minister more ardently and universally beloved than he. Another church was thus established, which has been prospered, until now it is one of our strongest stations. The same Conference which gave Charles Sherman to the North Second street church, sent Truman Seymour to this. We reach now the first living link in the chain of pastors. All who had preceded him, and many who have followed, have passed away. When appointed to this charge, no small task lay before him; the new church had drawn off many of the strong working men. A man whose name was as ointment poured forth, had left, while the memory of his fervid eloquence was yet fresh in the hearts of the people. Yet, girding himself for the task, he went prayerfully to his work. During the second year, after holding extra services for a week or two, with comparatively little result, he called an official meeting, and laying the case before them, said: "If you will stand by me in these meetings, and by your presence and prayers sustain me, we will go on, and I will lay my bones here, but that a victory shall come,—but if you will not, I shall close them." They decided to go on. After preaching that evening, Brother Seymour called the official board into the altar, and invited the unconverted to come to Christ. In less than five minutes the altar was crowded with earnest seekers, and a work of revival commenced, which continued for nearly three months. It was a glorious ingathering. The records show this to have been one of the most success-

ful pastorates in the history of the church. In 1838, Stephen Remington was stationed here; he passed two successful years and was succeeded by Charles P. Clarke, who also remained two years. In 1842, Noah Levings was again appointed pastor of this church. He was warmly welcomed by his old friends. Having dwelt already so long upon him, we only pause to say, that he passed a prosperous year among the people, and was then transferred to the New York Conference. James Covell was the next pastor. He had been but a few months here when his health began to decline. After struggling on in his ministerial work for some time, he found himself unable to proceed alone, and John W. Lindsay was secured as his assistant. It was at this period that John N. Maffitt visited State street church for the second time. His preaching now, as before, drew multitudes to the house of God, and the records of the church show, that over two hundred were received on probation. During the progress of this work of grace, Mr. Covell was gradually sinking, and the pastoral labor devolved on Mr. Lindsay. At length, on the 15th day of May, 1845, the messenger of death came. When, on the verge of dissolution, Dr. Skilton said to him, "You are very near your end," he replied, "I hope so." To his wife who sat by him, watching the last flickerings of the lamp of life, he said, "you are seeing me for the last time; I long to be gone." His last words were, "Tell Brother Mattison that I die happy." His funeral was attended in this church on the 17th of May, Bishop Hedding preaching a very appropriate discourse from the words "I am now ready to be offered," etc. There were present twenty or more of his brethren in the ministry. In 1845, Luman A. Sandford was appointed pastor, and A. W. Garvin, associate. During the two

years of Mr. Sandford's administration, several were added to the church. As a preacher, he was always plain, instructive and edifying. He was succeeded in 1847, by Allen Steele, who was one of the most brilliant and intellectual men that ever occupied this pulpit.

During the pastorate of Mr. Steele, the Congress street M. E. Church was built, he preaching the dedicatory sermon. The new church was greatly indebted to the labors of Isaac Hillman and his sainted sister, Elizabeth Hillman. Thus another daughter church went out from the old home, which has been greatly blessed in the conversion of souls. The South Troy church had been started previously.

The next pastor was Zephaniah N. Lewis. He was a "weeping prophet," and seldom preached without tears. After two years of faithful pastoral work he was succeeded, in 1851, by Stephen D. Brown, one of the most popular and efficient members of the Troy Conference. After two successful years among a people to whom he greatly endeared himself, he was transferred to the New York Conference and stationed at Bedford street. Lester Janes next proclaimed the word of life to the people of God in this church. He remained but a year, when Halsey W. Ransom was appointed. He was a man of positive character, and has left his impress upon the church. In 1856, Stephen Parks was sent to this charge and labored most acceptably among the people, looking carefully after all the interests of the church. Failing health compelled him, though reluctant, to turn from what he had hoped would be his life work, and at the close of his term of service he located among us. I feel I am now treading upon delicate ground, and as the events of the past few years are fresh in your memory, I shall pass more rapidly, leaving some later

hand to sketch the scenes and complete these outlines. The following pastors have been stationed here since the last mentioned date : Joseph K. Cheeseman in 1858, Ira G. Bidwell in 1860, Chas. W. Cushing in 1862, Stephen D. Brown the second time in 1864, Erastus Wentworth in 1865, and your speaker in 1868. During the pastorate of Dr. Wentworth, the new church enterprise was started, and to him we are indebted in no small degree for the edifice now so near completion, in which our next regular service as a church will be held.

I have been much troubled in preparing the preceding sketch, to know what to leave out ; taking in as it does a sweep of over sixty years of the history of a church replete with incidents which, rightly narrated, could not fail to interest and instruct us.

It must be seen to be a difficult task to dwell long enough at any one point to paint the scene in all its detail, or, having even roughly sketched it, to linger admiringly beside it. Other scenes were constantly arising in the future and beckoning us forward. The events of over half a century have consequently glided by us this evening, as the panorama of a beautiful landscape sweeps past, while we view it from the window of an express train speeding on to its destination.

There remain many facts and incidents to which we would advert, which could not properly be noticed in the chronological order to which we have hitherto been confined. We have already stated that Noah Levings was converted here, and went out from this church into the world's great harvest field to reap for God. The following persons have also gone from this church into the itinerant ranks : James C. Bontecou, J. B. Houghtaling, Merritt Bates, Wright Hazen, Asa C. Hand, William F. Hurd, Moses L. Seudder, Philetus Green,

H. Robinson, James Hulme, Wm. McComber, John Lucecook, F. G. Hibbard, C. R. Wilkins, Horace B. Knight, Daniel Mason, James Caughey. Most of these united with the Troy Conference, and J. B. Houghtaling was for twenty years its Secretary. Moses L. Scudder is at present presiding Elder of the New Haven district in the New York East Conference. Dr. Hibbard is now one of the leading men of the East Genesee Conference. James Caughey has been celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic as an eminently successful revivalist. He is a remarkable man, bold, original and unique; his soul-thrilling, spirit-stirring appeals have led tens of thousands to Christ. His first public testimony in this place after his conversion, as related to me during the past week, by a venerable member of this church, then present, was characteristic and prophetic of his future.

Many of the most prominent men of Methodism in this country have preached in the old wooden church. Bishop George has made its walls echo and ring with the burnings words of his powerful eloquence, that rushed on like a mighty cataract, with an impetuosity that bore down every opposition which had braced itself against the truth, and made his hearers passively resign themselves to an influence which was too strong for them. Here, that distinguished pioneer preacher, Freeborn Garretson, who was among the earliest Methodist ministers of American birth, has proclaimed the truth. Here, in their prime, Bishop Morris and Nathan Bangs have dispensed the word of life. Here, the saintly and seraphic Summerfield was admitted to the traveling connection, soon after arriving in this country; and here, too, that youthful minister of the Lord Jesus has borne his rapt hearers heavenward on the wings of his touching and lofty evangelical eloquence, till, like

those who had gazed on the Master's transfigured glory, they said "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Though half a century has gone since then, the rush of numerous years has not sufficed to wear away the impression of that hour; aged eyes have moistened and sunken cheeks have flushed, while trembling voices have told me of that sermon fifty long years ago.

Since the building of this house of worship, many of the prominent men of Methodism have occupied its pulpit. Bishop Hedding, besides preaching the dedicatory sermon as we have already stated, often proclaimed here the word of life. Dr. Olin, too, on several occasions, preached here, and when in the full strength of his colossal powers has, to use the language of one who heard him often, "gone through this pulpit with the tread of an elephant." Here, Bishop Waugh preached the funeral sermon on the death of Bishop Emory. Here, Dr. Dempster has held forth the word of life. Dr. Durbin, also in his masterly manner, has here presented the truth as it is in Jesus. "But what shall I more say, for the time would fail me to tell" of all the heroes of olden days or more recent years who have here done battle for God—men who were tried and true, and whose glittering steel has smitten error and defended truth while leading on the militant hosts of God's elect.

There are now living two persons who were members of the society at the building of the old wood church in 1809—John W. Mackey and Mrs. Ruby Squires, both now connected with the North Second Street Church.

The following persons, who were members prior to 1815, subsequently removed from Troy: Caleb Curtis, William McBurney, Eliphalet King, Roger King and Abner Foster.

The following remained in Troy, and died in connec-

tion with the church: Samuel Goodrich, Benjamin Betts, Stephen Andres, John Wright, John Loudon, Charles Lemon, William W. Whipple and Daniel Marvin, sr.

Of those who united before the building of this church we may mention, Dr. A. J. Skilton, Peter Bontecou, Zoroaster Comstock, Daniel Marvin, jr., John Morrison, Valentine Marvin, Jacob Adams, Thomas L. Ostrom, Thomas Archibald, Stephen Munroe, Eli Townsend, Sterling Armstrong and Lawrence Van Valkenburg. "These all died in the faith."

We may remark here, that Peter Bontecou was a *steward* in the church for forty five years. Dr. Skilton may be called the historian of the church, and to his labors in preserving early records we are in no small degree indebted for the facts presented this hour. Daniel Marvin, jr. was converted in early boyhood, for even in those days children were brought to the Saviour; yet, the propriety of his union with the church was questioned by some; they thought it incredible that one so young should become a Christian. This seems strange to us now, when childhood conversion is what we look for. He was a member of this church for more than fifty years.

Of those who are still living, who joined before the building of this church, we mention: J. G. Buswell, Wm. Tucker, Gardiner Landon, Lyman Bennett, G. D. Golden, Myron King, Waters W. Whipple and Harvey Betts.

Of those who have joined since the erection of this church, who that ever knew him will forget Alvin Williams, the man above all others of a meek and quiet spirit; or David Witherspoon, whose solid worth was remarked by all; or Wm. H. Manning, ever laboring

to promote the interests of the church ; or George Bristol, of whom it may be said that he "walked with God ;" or Charles J. Saxe, to whom we are indebted, more than to any other, for the edifice now so near completion, and whose generous heart and open hand were always ready for every good work ; or Henry Davis, whose songs of praise and ever-ready testimony have so often cheered us ; or good old Father Saunders, on whose calm face we used to look as he sat within the altar on communion Sabbath ? Dear old man, he needs no cane now to feel his uncertain way along the streets of the New Jerusalem.

Perhaps it is only just to say that there is hardly an evangelical church in Troy that has not been recruited by those who here received their first impulse in the spiritual life. And there are *multitudes* who were "to the manor born," who were led in the tender years of childhood to this house of prayer by those who have long since passed away, but who have gone out from us to seek other spiritual homes. It is not ours to question the motives which have led to this change, but we sometimes wonder if a feeling of *home-sickness* does not oppress them as the memory of the past comes back, and the recollected scenes of other days are revived again. We speak these words in no narrow sectarian spirit ; we are incapable of that ; but with that manly frankness which the occasion demands, and with a heart that beats true to what *we* think the best church of Christendom.

We have not mentioned any of the female members of the church. This is not because there are none worthy of the honor ; for, if the records may be believed, they here, as in almost every church, greatly outnumber the male members ; and, were we to repeat the list

this evening, there would be but little time for any other service. But, though we omit their names, their record is on high; and many of those upon whose deeds we have gladly dwelt this hour, were indebted not a little for the positions they held as members and officers of the church, to the nameless ones whom we pass by, and in their public life did but reflect the sweet influences of home. It may be proper, however, to say, in closing the historical part of our discourse, that the oldest member of the church, or the one who has longest been a continuous member of it, is Mrs. Mary Young; the record showing that she united July 10, 1816. She has consequently been connected with the State Street Church a little more than fifty-four years.

We have now taken a mental pilgrimage along the historical pathway of this church. We have seen it in its feeble beginning and its growing strength; we have noticed the daughter churches as they have gone out from the old homestead, and have rejoiced in their prosperity and increase. A wondrous power this—of memory; by it we are enabled to live over again the past, look upon faces which we last saw just before the coffin lid hid them from our tear-dimmed eyes, and listen to voices which used to thrill our hearts with their music. And I greatly misjudge if, as the olden days have been recalled this hour, old hearts have not grown young again, and almost forgotten that so many years have glided swift away since the times of which we have spoken.

Such a review is salutary, if it but teach us the secret of our success. This church has a history toward which none of her children need blush to point; but we do not glory in what we are, or in what our fathers have

been: we are thankful for the thousands who have found Christ;* we are thankful for the influence this "mother of Methodism" in this section has had, and for the number of her daughter churches, which "rise up and call her blessed;"† we are not forgetful of the princely men of our Israel, who have here preached the word "in the demonstration of the spirit and with power." But God forbid we should glory, save in the one great fact of the manifested presence of Divinity. We can change slightly the dying words of our great founder, and say, *The best of all is, God has been with us.* This has been the secret of our success as a church. When the early heroes of Methodism proclaimed the truth in rude cabins and barns, or in the open air, God was with them, and the word went forth keen and sharp as arrows spirit-speeded and divinely-guided to their mark. Then they built simple chapels; God was with them still, and the word was yet mighty. Now, as a church, we are having costlier edifices — they are rising all over our land. It seems almost incredible, yet statistics show us that for fifty years Methodism has dedicated a church a day to the worship of Almighty God, and for the past few years we have averaged more than that. But will God be with us still? If we must return to the simple chapels, or the log school-houses of the early days, to secure the Divine presence, we had better do it at once — we should pray, "*If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.*" Nay, let these time-honored walls stand, and let the others, which rise in massive strength beside them, be leveled in the dust,

* About four thousand persons have united with the church since its organization.

† In whole or in part she has given birth to seven churches.

The first of these is the fact that the
 the second is the fact that the
 the third is the fact that the
 the fourth is the fact that the
 the fifth is the fact that the
 the sixth is the fact that the
 the seventh is the fact that the
 the eighth is the fact that the
 the ninth is the fact that the
 the tenth is the fact that the
 the eleventh is the fact that the
 the twelfth is the fact that the
 the thirteenth is the fact that the
 the fourteenth is the fact that the
 the fifteenth is the fact that the
 the sixteenth is the fact that the
 the seventeenth is the fact that the
 the eighteenth is the fact that the
 the nineteenth is the fact that the
 the twentieth is the fact that the
 the twenty-first is the fact that the
 the twenty-second is the fact that the
 the twenty-third is the fact that the
 the twenty-fourth is the fact that the
 the twenty-fifth is the fact that the
 the twenty-sixth is the fact that the
 the twenty-seventh is the fact that the
 the twenty-eighth is the fact that the
 the twenty-ninth is the fact that the
 the thirtieth is the fact that the
 the thirty-first is the fact that the
 the thirty-second is the fact that the
 the thirty-third is the fact that the
 the thirty-fourth is the fact that the
 the thirty-fifth is the fact that the
 the thirty-sixth is the fact that the
 the thirty-seventh is the fact that the
 the thirty-eighth is the fact that the
 the thirty-ninth is the fact that the
 the fortieth is the fact that the
 the forty-first is the fact that the
 the forty-second is the fact that the
 the forty-third is the fact that the
 the forty-fourth is the fact that the
 the forty-fifth is the fact that the
 the forty-sixth is the fact that the
 the forty-seventh is the fact that the
 the forty-eighth is the fact that the
 the forty-ninth is the fact that the
 the fiftieth is the fact that the
 the fifty-first is the fact that the
 the fifty-second is the fact that the
 the fifty-third is the fact that the
 the fifty-fourth is the fact that the
 the fifty-fifth is the fact that the
 the fifty-sixth is the fact that the
 the fifty-seventh is the fact that the
 the fifty-eighth is the fact that the
 the fifty-ninth is the fact that the
 the sixtieth is the fact that the
 the sixty-first is the fact that the
 the sixty-second is the fact that the
 the sixty-third is the fact that the
 the sixty-fourth is the fact that the
 the sixty-fifth is the fact that the
 the sixty-sixth is the fact that the
 the sixty-seventh is the fact that the
 the sixty-eighth is the fact that the
 the sixty-ninth is the fact that the
 the seventieth is the fact that the
 the seventy-first is the fact that the
 the seventy-second is the fact that the
 the seventy-third is the fact that the
 the seventy-fourth is the fact that the
 the seventy-fifth is the fact that the
 the seventy-sixth is the fact that the
 the seventy-seventh is the fact that the
 the seventy-eighth is the fact that the
 the seventy-ninth is the fact that the
 the eightieth is the fact that the
 the eighty-first is the fact that the
 the eighty-second is the fact that the
 the eighty-third is the fact that the
 the eighty-fourth is the fact that the
 the eighty-fifth is the fact that the
 the eighty-sixth is the fact that the
 the eighty-seventh is the fact that the
 the eighty-eighth is the fact that the
 the eighty-ninth is the fact that the
 the ninetieth is the fact that the
 the ninety-first is the fact that the
 the ninety-second is the fact that the
 the ninety-third is the fact that the
 the ninety-fourth is the fact that the
 the ninety-fifth is the fact that the
 the ninety-sixth is the fact that the
 the ninety-seventh is the fact that the
 the ninety-eighth is the fact that the
 the ninety-ninth is the fact that the
 the hundredth is the fact that the

rather than "go hence" without the "presence" of God. Many things are important to the success of the church : The word of God, as an infallible rule of faith and practice ; the Sabbath, coming with its holy calm, and laying its hand upon the restless pulse of care ; the sanctuary, whose doors swing open invitingly on this day, where we may come to hear that word ; ministers who shall declare to us the truth, and urge it home upon our consciences. All these are great blessings to the church ; but God *may* dispense with them all ; nay, he *has* done it ; with no pulpit but the rugged steeps of Sinai—no roof but the vaulted arch of heaven, God made the clouds his pavilion, and summoning his audience by the trumpet blast, which waxed "louder and louder," till the awe-struck people trembled before him, he has *proclaimed his own truth and uttered his own word.*"

He has made angels his messengers, and even given speech to voiceless nature, that she might open her sealed lips, and speak to man. We may, then, if God wills it, and by his providence indicates it, dispense with all else ; but, as a church, we can *never* dispense with the manifested presence of Jehovah. We should pray, with Moses, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." There is much that is instructive in the condition of the people when this prayer was uttered. They were fleeing from a cruel enemy ; they were journeying through a desert land ; they were surrounded by hostile nations, and were hastening toward a land of promise ; already they had arrived upon its border—now they pause—every heart is longing for the expected inheritance, every eye kindles with delight, as, encamped upon the plain of Moab, they look across the Jordan, and the hills of Canaan rise before them. "Yes, that is it," they say, "the land God swear unto

our fathers, that he would give it them and to their children, for an everlasting inheritance." The land for which they had sighed, while writhing beneath the iron heel of oppression; they shall feel the Egyptian fetter and lash no more—the forty years of wilderness wandering are ended now. But stop! Because of their sinfulness, God has threatened to withdraw his presence from them. "And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned and no man did put on his ornaments." There is wailing throughout the camp—Moses hastens into the Divine presence, pleads with God, secures the promise, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses replies, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." "Better that we tarry in the wilderness; nay, better that we retrace our steps and seek again Egyptian bondage, and, holding out these hands so lately freed, beg that once more the fetters of slavery may be riveted on them. Better all this, better a thousand times, than to dwell even in the promised Canaan-land, if thy presence go not with us."

Such was Moses' estimate of the value of the Divine attendance. Such should be ours. My brethren, this is an epoch in your history; the commencement of a new era, from which the historian of future years shall begin a new chapter in the record of this church. Precisely what that chapter may contain, we do not know; *we need not know.*

Mr. Cuyler likens Christians to rowers in a boat: "They sit with their backs to the bow, and cannot see what lies ahead; but the helmsman at the stern is on the lookout, and he steers the boat where he wills. So in all our godly undertakings we sit with our backs to

the future. It is all unknown, untried, impenetrable; we know not what the morrow may bring forth, but it is our business to pull at the oar of prayer and earnest labor. There is a Divine Helmsman who sees the future, and who holds the rudder in his hand. We have only to commit our way to Him, and then pull at the oar of duty." But will God still be with us? The answer to this question is not so difficult as it may seem. And this answer depends upon the spirit with which we enter and worship in our new temple. The spirit that prays — *earnestly, heartily prays* the prayer of Moses — will receive the response which came to him. O! my brethren, beloved, endeared to me by a thousand tender associations and memories, bear with me while I press home to-night the thought of the absolute and unconditional necessity of the Divine presence. A Presence, without which we must be unprotected and defenceless; but which will be as a "wall of fire round about us," to receive and hurl back the assaults of evil as the rock-bound coast beats back the ocean billows, so that even the "gates of hell shall not prevail against us." A Presence, without which the unaimed and pointless arrows of truth will scatter, producing no effect; but with which they shall speed to the hearts of the "King's enemies." A Presence, without which we may meet in gilded temples, and engage in elaborate services, aided by the most splendid ritual — while amid all this *seeming life* there reigns the icy coldness of the charnel house, and the damps of spiritual death drip from the pendants of the vaulted walls, but with which we may lie scourged and chained in "inner dungeons," and, while the soul is bathed with the serene glory of the heaven of heavens, exultingly sing :

Content with beholding his face,
 My all to his pleasure resigned,
 No changes of season or place
 Would make any change in my mind;
 While blest with a sense of his love,
 A palace a toy would appear;
 And prisons would palaces prove,
 If Jesus would dwell with me there.

My brethren, do I not rightly judge your hearts? Do you not all feel that that which is to be the chief attraction of our new house of worship; that wherein is to reside its true glory, is not its architectural beauty, not anything the eye can rest upon, but the sublime fact that God will make it his dwelling-place!

We stand at its threshold; before we enter it we will offer the prayer of Moses. As your representative, shall I do it now, and will every heart in this large audience join most earnestly in it? *O Lord, "if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence."* Hark! the quickened ear of Christian faith catches the answer; it comes from the "excellent glory"—it trembles on the evening air—"MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE." We grasp the promise and look hopefully to the future. When God directed Moses at Mount Sinai to erect an altar on which to offer his sacrifices, he gave him this promise: "*In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*" Accordingly, when the tabernacle was reared, we read, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And in all their journeyings they were guided by this mysterious cloud-pillar.

The divinely appointed signal for their removal was the lifting and moving of the cloud; when this occurred, every tent was struck, the tabernacle taken down, and they took up their line of march whithersoever it led

them; when it paused, their tents were pitched, the tabernacle was set up, and the cloud settled down and hovered over it. The place they had left was as though the tabernacle had never been there, while in the new encampment God revealed his presence. So, when they were established in the promised land, and at God's command the gorgeous temple of Solomon was built, the same divine manifestation that was in the tabernacle of skins in the wilderness, was in the temple of cedar and gold in Jerusalem. At its very dedication God owned it and filled it with his glory. So also with the second temple. At the laying of its foundations, while the multitudes of Israel sang praises and shouted aloud for joy, certain aged men wept aloud with grief. They remembered the former temple, their early associations clustered around it, and they imagined that the glory had departed. But God said, "I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place will I give peace." Thus, was God's presence in *all places* where his name was recorded and his worship celebrated. So it has been under the Christian dispensation. Thus it has been with this church; the cloud has rested here for more than half a century; the Shekinah glory has beamed from this altar and filled the house with its radiance. To-night that cloud lifts—and this is God's temple no longer. But this fountain of sacred influence is not to be sealed; the cloud shall not float away beyond the reach of our vision; it shall settle down again upon the place in which He hath chosen to record His name; there He will come unto us, and He will bless us.

LIST OF TRUSTEES,

SINCE 1817.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Abner Foster..... | 1817-19 |
| John Loudon..... | 1817-20 |
| John Wright..... | 1817-24 |
| Roger King..... | 1817-20 |
| William W. Whipple..... | 1817-26 & 1827-28 |
| Charles Lemon..... | 1819-21 & 1826-29 |
| James Russell..... | 1820-21 & 1827-30 |
| George Smith..... | 1820-22 |
| Dennis Belding..... | 1821-24 & 1828-31 |
| Arthur Milliken..... | 1821-27 |
| Elias Disbrow..... | 1822-27 |
| William Chambers..... | 1824-26 |
| Harvey Betts..... | 1824-28 |
| Sterling Armstrong..... | 1825-27 |
| Levi Rogers..... | 1827-28 |
| Enos Randol..... | 1828-30 |
| Eli Townsend..... | 1828-34 |
| Daniel Marvin, Jr..... | 1829 |
| Charles Lane..... | 1830-33 |
| Thomas L. Ostrom..... | 1830- & 1833-35 |
| John W. Mackey..... | 1830-34 |
| Zina P. Egleston..... | 1831-33 & 1834-36 |
| Isaac W. Talman..... | 1833-35 |
| Jesse Anthony..... | 1834-36 |
| John G. Buswell..... | 1835-47 |
| Gardner Laudon..... | 1835-45 & 1850-59 |
| Waters W. Whipple..... | 1836-39 |
| Valentine Marvin..... | 1836-48 |
| Charles W. Thompson..... | 1836-42 |
| Noah Clapp..... | 1839-44 & 1845-49 |
| John F. McLaughlin..... | 1842-45 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| William H. Manning..... | 1844-50 |
| Enoch Hunt | 1845-48 |
| *Lyman R. Avery..... | 1847-50 & 1867-71 |
| John Christie..... | 1848-50 |
| Joseph Hillman..... | 1848-49 |
| John Archibald..... | 1849-52 |
| *John M. Corliss..... | 1852-71 |
| Gilbert D. Golden..... | 1850-59 |
| Isaac W. Crissey..... | 1850-52 |
| Elizur S. Brainard | 1851-57 |
| Eliphalet R. King..... | 1852-56 |
| Albert C. Gunnison..... | 1856-59 |
| Othniel W. Edson..... | 1858-61 |
| Charles J. Saxe | 1859-67 |
| Alanson D. Wilcox..... | 1859-62 |
| *Reuben Peckham..... | 1861 |
| *George A. Stone..... | 1862 |
| *Perrin W. Converse..... | 1866 |
| *George B. Cluett | 1866 |
| Edwin A. Burrows | 1866-68 |
| *Sidney T. Cary | 1867 |
| *J. W. Alfred Cluett..... | 1868 |
| *Stephen Parks..... | 1868 |

* Present Board of Trustees.

D 285189.1

15

MAY '75



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

